

CHAPTER 13 PRELIMINARY PROJECT SCHEDULE

Following the initial siting study process, the project will move forward with an application under the Montana Major Facility Siting Act (MFSA), and will later involve environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), compliance and coordination with other Federal and State environmental and permitting laws and agencies, engineering design, material procurement, and construction. Assuming timely approval of the project within NorthWestern Energy, the process may begin in January of 2007, with a final in-service date in early February of 2013.

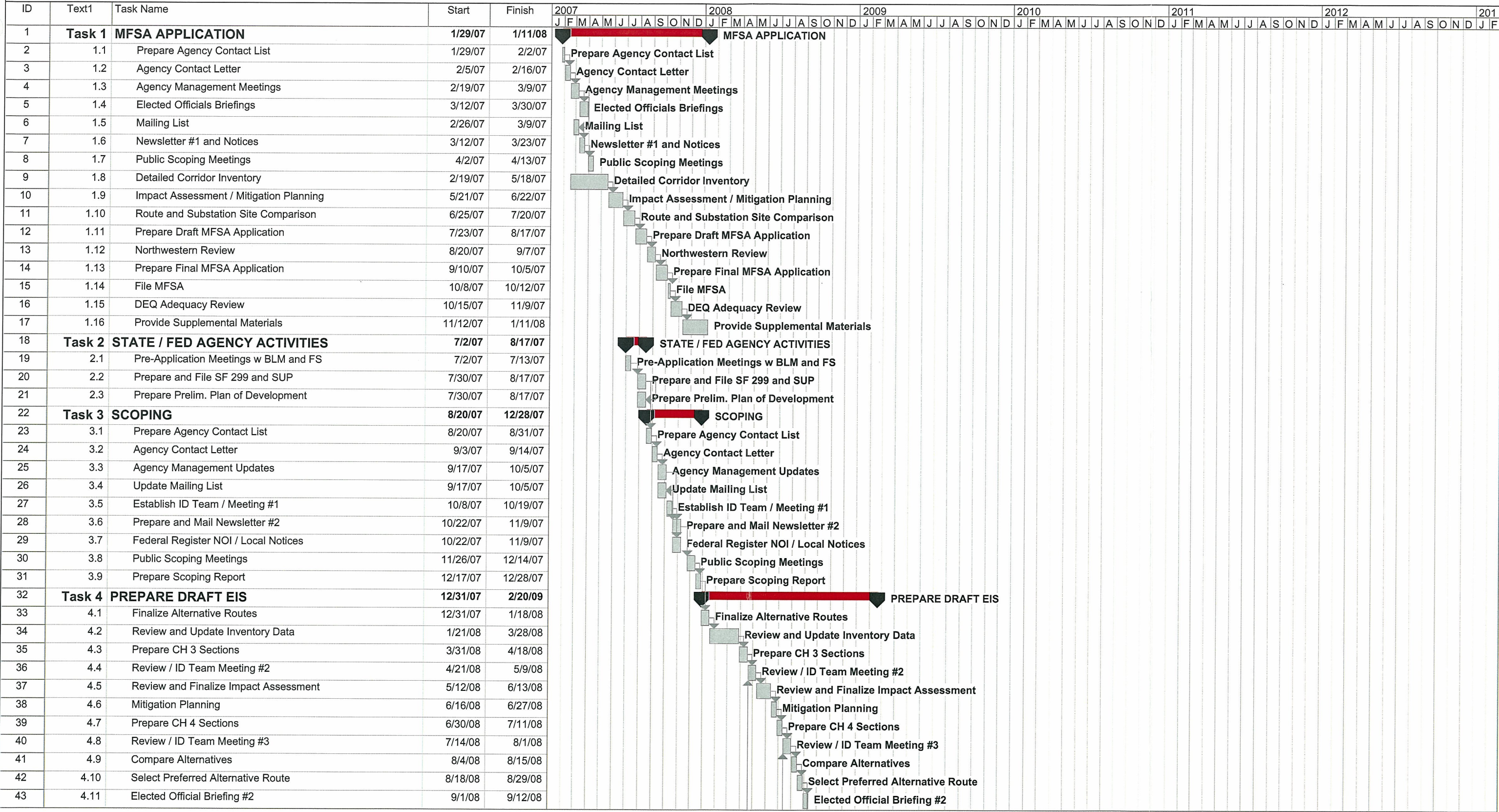
An early version of the project schedule was reviewed by NorthWestern, and several revisions were made to the lands and right of way portions.

The major tasks involved for project permitting, engineering and construction are detailed in Figure 13.1, and include:

- Montana Major Facilities Siting Act (MSFA) Application (1/29/2007 through 1/11/2008)
- State and Federal agency activities and coordination (7/02/2007 through 8/17/2007)
- Public scoping (8/20/2007 through 1/28/2007)
- Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) development (12/31/2007 through 9/4/2009)
- Joint Record of Decision, Grant of Right-of-Way on public lands (9/21/2009 through 12/18/2009)
- Construction surveys, engineering, specification and bidding (4/13/2009 through 7/1/2011)
- Agency Consultations; Biological surveys and Biological Assessment; Section 7 consultation, cultural surveys and cultural report (2/15/2007 through 7/23/2010)
- Landowner contact and private R-O-W acquisition (5/11/2009 through 6/4/2010)
- Material bidding and procurement (4/13/2009 through 12/30/2011)
- Line construction, tower assembly and erection (10/25/2010 through 2/1/2013)
- Substation construction (7/4/2011 through 12/28/2012)

The survey and engineering task of the project may be flexible to accelerate project completion. However, higher risk levels would be incurred the earlier survey and engineering is started before issue of the anticipated September 2009 Record of Decision (ROD). A certain level of risk is currently built into the preliminary schedule, with the engineering tasks beginning 8 months before the ROD. During the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement, significant adjustments to the project centerline as a result of public comment, appeals and agency requirements may necessitate additional survey work, tower re-design and layout adjustment, access road plan modification, specification and contract document adjustments, and other changes that would result in additional costs incurred by NWE. This may be a significant percentage of the engineering costs if the agencies feel major re-routing in response to environmental issues or public feedback is necessary to issue a Record of Decision. With a construction cost of approximately \$1.4 million per mile for the transmission line component of the project, changes that result in a longer line would also significantly affect the overall costs of the project. This additional work and project expense may actually push project completion past the anticipated December 2012 date.

Townsend to Midpoint 500kV Schedule
November 10, 2006



Task Progress Milestone Summary

Figure 13.1 Project Schedule

Townsend to Midpoint 500kV Schedule

November 10, 2006

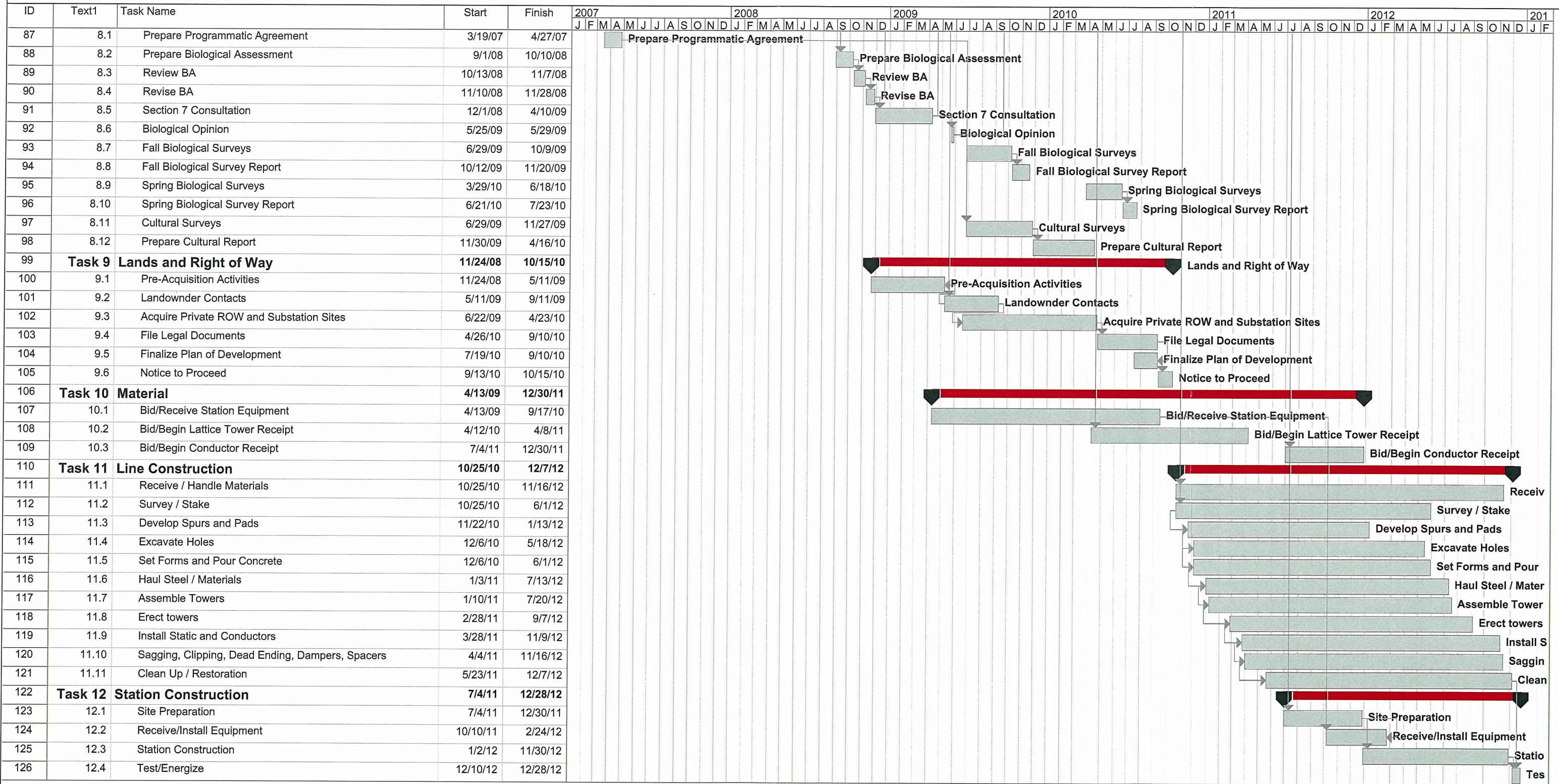


Task Progress Milestone Summary

Figure 13.1 Project Schedule

Townsend to Midpoint 500kV Schedule

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Figure 13.1 Project Schedule